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THE CONNECTICUT LOYALISTS

At the beginning of the War for American Independence Connecticut occupied a phenomenal position in the political hemisphere. For nearly a century and a half she had been an independent republic *de facto*. In her ability to govern herself she stood pre-eminent among her sister colonies of the Revolutionary period. Her treatment of threatening internal ills—of Toryism¹ in particular—was prophylactic in character at the outset; in truth, throughout the entire great struggle, tory-germs of civil disorder were rarely suffered to develop beyond the embryo.

The party of the Loyalists was not lacking in men whose principles command respect. Of this class was he whose conservatism led him honestly to fear anarchy and confusion as a result of the so-called "experiment" in popular self-government. But it may be questioned why even such a man should have been found a "Non-Associator" in the stable little republic, whose people had governed themselves wisely and well for more than a hundred years.² Unlike his brethren of other provinces, he was not to be frightened at the alternative presented where there was no legislature; where royal governors, after subverting assemblies, had themselves abdicated their authority; where the "officious and offensive" grasped the reins of government, for which, it was urged, "they could adduce the laws of neither God nor man."³ This plea was not valid in Connecticut. She had not then, and had never had, demagogues at the head of her affairs.

"In no state in the world," observes President Dwight, "was an individual of more importance as a man than in Connecticut. Such a degree of freedom was never before united with such a de-

¹ "Probably no one of the thirteen original states was as active, alert and efficient in the restraint of Tories during the war, as our own state of Connecticut." Jonathan Trumbull, in *Year-Book* (1895-6) of the *Connecticut Sons of the American Revolution*, 183. Cf. Sanford's *Connecticut*, 222.

² The Connecticut pioneers were firm believers in representative democracy. "By a free choice," said Hooker, "the hearts of the people will be more inclined to the love of the persons chosen, and more ready to yield obedience." *Notes to Hooker's Sermon* (May 31, 1638). Cf. *The 250th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Constitution*, published in January 1889 by the Connecticut Historical Society, p. 45.

³ Cf. Dr. G. E. Ellis's "The Loyalists and their Fortunes," in Winsor's *America*, VII. 191.

gree of stability ; or so much individual consequence in all the members of a community with such cheerful and uniform obedience to its laws. Few places in the world," he believes, "presented a fairer example of peace and good order."¹

The outbreak of hostilities brought no upheaval here in the leadership of affairs. The governor and both branches of the legislature worked together in harmony, and, being chosen by the freemen themselves, were enabled to legislate favorably to the popular will. The people understood their privileges, were strongly attached to their ancient constitution, and defended it at all times. They regarded it as their native, indefeasible right to be subject to no laws except those made by their own representatives. Their bitterest detractor, Rev. Samuel Peters, says, satirically, that "the multitude considered their General Assembly to be equal to the British Parliament." He admits that "they were empowered to make laws in Church and State agreeable to their own will and pleasure, without the King's approbation."²

The constitution³ had been formed and adopted by the freemen in person, as early as January 1639 ; acceded to and ratified, twenty-three years later, by the liberal charter of Charles II. Extensive powers were vested in their own elected governor and council ; yet so jealous were the people of their liberty that, if the former failed to call the legislature after being petitioned by the freemen, then the constables of the several towns were to convoke the legislature, which body could choose a moderator to act as governor, and the body thus formed had all legislative authority. Such an emergency, however, never arose : the governor and members of the assembly had all served their apprenticeship at town meetings, had held some town office, and, proving satisfactory, had been promoted to their respective positions. They were themselves from and of the people, and appreciated the people's needs. So pervasive was the democratic spirit that even the negroes of the colony (who, in 1774, numbered about six thousand) had become infected, and for several years elected their governor annually—continuing to do so for a time, it is said, after the close of the war. Not to be outdone by their masters the blacks treated their sable executive with profound respect, and he never failed to receive the honorable title of "Governor" when addressed by any of his colored constituents.

¹ Dwight's *Travels*, I. 196, 285-286.

² In the Charter of 1662, Charles II. retained no veto power.

³ "It is worthy of note that this document contains none of the conventional references to a 'dread sovereign' or a 'gracious King,' nor the slightest allusion to the British or any other government outside of Connecticut itself." Fiske's *Beginnings of New England*, 127-128. Neither was there any mention made of the English company, holding a patent of the land.

At the beginning of the war there were six counties and seventy-two townships in the state. Each county had its sheriff and judges, built and repaired its own court-houses and jails, and taxed itself for that purpose. Every town had its three or more selectmen (frequently seven), two or more justices of the peace, two or more constables, town clerk, town treasurer, surveyors of highways (sometimes a score in number), fence-viewers, listers, collectors of taxes, leather-sealers, grand jurors, tithingmen, hay-wards, chimney-viewers, gaugers, packers, sealers of weights and measures, key-keepers, recorders of "sheep-marks," etc. Including state, county and town officials there were at least three thousand men holding public office in the state, each of whom had sworn to do his duty conformably to its constitution and laws. The selectmen were the executive officers of the town, and, like all others, were elected annually at the town meetings by the voters themselves.

These seventy-two townships were so many little republics,¹ where, at the annual meetings, the people were early schooled in the art of self-government, and where they learned to protect themselves from their enemies. Here their legislators and local officers first learned to do public business, and to do it peaceably and in good order. It was an old and established law that, if a person interrupted or disturbed the order, peace or proceedings of a town meeting, or hindered the choice of a moderator, or vilified him after being chosen, he should be subject to a fine.² None spoke without leave, and all without interruption. It was well understood, too, that it was for the general interest that every voter should attend. As early as 1702 an act was passed ordering town clerks to keep a list of all the freemen in each town, and at every meeting the clerk or a constable was to call the roll. Absentees were to pay a fine of two shillings (collected by a constable and disposed for the use of the town), unless such delinquent could make it appear to the majority of the selectmen that his absence was unavoidable.³ A large proportion of the people held public office at some time or

¹ "The most noteworthy feature of the Connecticut republic was that it was a federation of independent towns, and that all attributes of sovereignty not expressly granted to the General Court remained, as of original right, in the towns." Fiske's *Beginnings of New England*, 127-128. For opposing views, cf. *The Beginnings of Connecticut Towns*, by Professor Charles M. Andrews, in *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 7.

² Act of May 1729, in *Colonial Records*, VII. 245.

³ Act of October 1702, in *Colonial Records*, IV. 398. In the Hartford town records of 1635, appears the following: "It is ordered that there shall be a set meeting of all the townsmen together the first Thursday in every month, by nine of the clock in the forenoon . . . and whosoever of them do not meet at the place and time set, shall forfeit 2s. 6d. for every default."

other, all were employed in promoting the general interests of society, and a general spirit of good neighborhood prevailed among all classes. Thus, to use the words of another: "The little federal republic silently grew until it became the strongest political structure on the continent."¹

It will be perceived that, at the dawn of the American Revolution, the exponent of anti-republican principles was bound to be accounted, in Connecticut, little less than a political monstrosity. Any person here at this period who held the opinion that the people were unable to govern themselves, was looked upon with a feeling akin to contempt by his fellow-citizens and treated accordingly. Unfortunately patriotic resentment subsequently led to excesses² in sporadic instances and probably caused, in the minds of some, apprehensions as to the outcome of the popular movement. Others became "conservators of peace" solely because they feared the strength and resources of the British realm; they believed that the colonies, already enjoying extensive privileges under her government, were needlessly and futilely seeking a separation. A few professed to be dissatisfied because the General Assembly was more arbitrary than the Parliament itself; while one economically-disposed individual boldly declared that the Continental Congress "ought to be punished for putting the country to so much cost and charge," for he believed "they did no more good than a parcel of squaws."

But it will be found, on due investigation, that Toryism in Connecticut was less secular than sectarian in character; that it was chiefly the outgrowth of jealousies and fears begot by strong religious prejudices. The determined opposition on the part of the people and their representatives (who were mostly Congregationalists) to the introduction into the province of Episcopacy with a foreign prelacy induced the body of the Churchmen to embrace the cause of the Crown, believing that only in the event of success to the British arms could they, as the weaker party, hope for encour-

¹ Fiske's *New England*, 128.

² In one or two instances some irresponsible persons took the law into their own hands and perpetrated acts not sanctioned by the better class of Whigs. In Simsbury one Tory was shot for being found beyond his own premises—after having been "warned." Another was publicly hanged in Hartford, and the gallows left standing to intimidate other Tories. Phelps, *Newgate of Connecticut*, 28. In Windham, two men, known as "Peters's Spies," who had been arrested for conveying treacherous correspondence, were forced to *run the gauntlet* between two rows of women and children armed with switches and broom-sticks. Larned's *Windham County*, II. 136. For the treatment of the notorious Churchman, Rev. Samuel Peters, cf. *id.*, II. 133-136. Rev. Mr. Leaming, the Episcopal clergyman at Norwalk, was also the victim of a gross outrage at the hands of a "lawless mob." Cf. Beardsley's *History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut*, I. 316 (Boston, 1865).

agement and permanent religious security—an alternative, in which ecclesiastical principles prevailed over the sentiments of the patriot. Moreover, the score of Episcopal clergymen here were stipendiaries of the English Missionary Society. Hence, unlike many of their brethren at the South,¹ (who generally derived support from those to whom they ministered), they “conceived the measures of the colonies to be unwise, if not unjust, and destined to end either in defeat or ruin on the one hand, or the overthrow of the Church on the other.” As faithful “Missionaries” they deemed it a moral obligation, imposed upon them by their oath of allegiance taken at the time of their ordination, to pray for, and give homage to their “Most gracious Sovereign Lord, King George, and the Royal Family.” Through frequent observance of this rubrical formula and respect for pastoral injunctions, the laity of the church became, in turn, duly and piously impressed with the divine rights of the King and the sanctity of his royal prerogative. So eminent an advocate and historian of the Church as Dr. Eben Beardsley believes, that “it speaks well for the influence and Christian character of the Episcopal clergy [in Connecticut,] that their congregation so generally sympathized with them in their views both of religious and civil duties;” that “they inculcated upon their members, both from the pulpit and in private conversation, a peaceful submission to the King and to the parent state;” that “they were fearless in avowing and vindicating what they conceived to be not only the essential rights of the British Crown, but the essential interests of their venerated communion;” that, as a consequence, the Churchmen throughout the colony “espoused for the most part the cause of the mother country, and thereby showed themselves loyal subjects of the King.” Out of 130 families who attended divine service in his two churches, Rev. Richard Mansfield of Derby reported (December 29, 1775), 110 to be “firm, steadfast friends of the Government,” having no sympathy with the popular measures and detesting the “unnatural rebellion.”²

¹Episcopacy was more firmly established at the South; being supported by the wealthy, the officials of government, army and naval officers, professional men and merchants. There was evidently some laxity of discipline, both clergy and laity opposing for temporary reasons the importation of English bishops. Not being pensioners of the foreign missionary society, the Southern clergy felt more free to share the patriotic sentiments of the people; and some of them, in truth, proved themselves ardent patriots by serving actively in the field. Cf. Perry's *History of the American Episcopal Church, 1587-1883*, I., Chap. XXIV.

²Beardsley's *History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut*, I. 306-339. Cf. Davis's *Wallingford and Meriden*, 248. Dr. Beardsley states that “there was just a score of clergymen of the Church of England in Connecticut at the outbreak of hostilities,” all but two of whom were natives of the colony.

Judging from the census of 1774 there were in that year twenty-five thousand¹ males in Connecticut between the ages of sixteen and fifty, and of these about two thousand were Tories—most of them in the western part of the state, especially in Fairfield county.² This marked localization of Loyalist sentiment west of the Housatonic river has been commonly attributed to “the remoteness of this part of the colony from Boston and its almost exclusive trade with New York.”³ But while this may explain satisfactorily why the distant section did not participate so strongly “in the incipient spirit of the Revolution,” it does not adequately account for the prevalence of Toryism *per se*; for which organic social ill some more subtle moral agency will be suspected, and the essential facts are not wanting to prove such suspicion well-grounded.

It was a common apprehension in Connecticut prior to the Revolution that the growth of the English Church was hostile to civil and religious liberty and favorable to the ultimate establishment of a “monarchical government with a legally associated hierarchy.” In consequence of this general alarm, a “Convention of Delegates” of Congregational divines from all parts of the colony appointed, at their annual meeting, a committee to investigate the subject. Acting as their agent, the Rev. Elizur Goodrich of Durham made an “accurate and toilsome collection of statistics” relative to the number of Episcopalians in Connecticut and their proportion to Non-Episcopalians. In closing his report,⁴ September 5, 1774, Mr. Goodrich makes the Episcopalians about one in thirteen of the total number of inhabitants. But, says Dr. Beardsley, “nowhere in the colony, according to his estimates, was the church so strong as in Fairfield county, where it embraced about *one-third of the people* ;”⁵ while at Newtown—the hot-bed of Toryism—there was found an equal division (“1084 in either case”). Rev. John Beach, pastor in

¹ In *Records of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution*, 27,823 different names are indexed, and it is thought that 30,000 may have served. See p. xi.

² The principal Loyalist towns were Newtown and Redding. From a “Memorial to the General Council of Safety” (February, 1778), signed by the selectmen of Redding, it appears that 49 Tories in that town had “gone over the enemy;” that 28 Whigs were serving in the Continental Army; and that 112 “able-bodied men” were left. The Churchmen of Newtown were, in 1779, the major part of the population; and the Tories slightly outnumbered the Whigs.

³ Hinman's *Connecticut in the American Revolution*, 18.

⁴ *Minutes of the Convention of Delegates from the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, and Associations of Connecticut, 1766-1775*, p. 62, Appendix, (Hartford, 1843.) After 1763, the English bishops incessantly pressed upon the ministry the adoption of Archbishop Secker's scheme of introducing an Episcopal hierarchy into America, which would have carried with it some of the worst features of the prerogative. Grahame's *History of the United States*, IV. 138.

⁵ Beardsley's *History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut*, I. 289.

this latter town and one of the most energetic Loyalists in the state, continued the public exercise of his ministerial functions¹ throughout the war, protesting "that he would do his duty, preach and pray for the King till the Rebels cut out his tongue." He also presided over the church in East Redding, and was instrumental in organizing the famous "Association of Loyalists" at that place. Near the close of the war (October 31, 1781), he penned an exultant epistle to the secretary of the "Home Society" that "Newtown and the Church-of-England part of Redding were, he believed, the only parts of New England that had refused to comply with the doings of Congress."² While it is evident, therefore, that of the Loyalists throughout the colony the churchmen of Fairfield county constituted a majority, nevertheless there were some who did not venture to become, like certain of their pastors, conspicuously active in their opposition to popular measures, and they may, perhaps, with some propriety be classed among the so-called "conservators of peace."

Patriotic spirit kindled to a blaze in Connecticut in the summer of 1774. Every loyal citizen was filled with indignation over the unjust treatment of his friends in Massachusetts. Special meetings were held in nearly every town, at which resolutions were passed censuring the Boston Port Bill; the timid and ignorant were informed of their rights and grievances; committees of correspondence were appointed, "Sons of Liberty" organized, and "liberty poles" erected throughout the state. Rigorous measures were speedily

¹ His brother pastors had discontinued their public prayers by vote of the Convention at New Haven, July 23, 1776.

In concluding his letter of October 31, 1781, Mr. Beach wrote: "I do most heartily thank the Venerable Society for their liberal support, and beg that they will accept this, which is, I believe, my last bill, viz., £325, which, according to former custom, is due." During the war, says Dr. Beardsley, (I. 318), "a generous collection, *by royal order*, was made in England and sent to be distributed among the score of Missionaries in Connecticut." The latter "were not disposed," adds he, (336), "to forfeit their stipends from the English Society . . . while the struggle was still undecided, and the prospects for the colonists so doubtful." "If there were a few instances," says he, (339), "where the flocks were more patriotic than their pastors, the reason for this might he found in the difference of their relations to the Society."

² In the autumn of 1775 the selectmen and principal inhabitants of Newtown were prevailed upon to give a bond, with a large pecuniary penalty inserted, not to take up arms against the colonies, as well as not to discourage enlistments into the American forces.

Ridgefield, by vote of her town meeting, December 1774, had also protested against the acts of the Continental Congress. She fell heartily into line the succeeding year, however (December 1775), and appointed her Committee of Inspection, composed of twenty-six members. Rev. Epenetus Townsend was pastor of the English Church in this place; and it is a significant fact that, though many members of his flock were prominent villagers, but one of them is mentioned anywhere in the town or state records as having participated in the patriotic movement, local or otherwise. See list of church members in Teller's *Ridgefield*, 113-127.

adopted to search for and crush out the noxious spirit of disaffection. Yet, except in a few aggravated cases, the Tories were at first treated merely as social outlaws. The following resolution of the people of Coventry is a fair sample of most of the others passed at this time: to wit, "We view with grief, and detestation those unnatural enemies of our constitution, from amongst ourselves; those vile *anathemas*, who, from motives selfish and servile, to court arbitrary promotion, or servilely to cringe to despotic sway, are affording their aid and assistance to, and co-operating with the ministerial tools of arbitrary power: (they) are unworthy of that friendship and esteem which constitutes the bond of social happiness, and ought to be treated with contempt and total neglect."¹

It was soon found that resolutions of this kind were likely to prove inadequate. The battle of Lexington had not yet been fought, it is true, but it was deemed expedient, in view of a probable war, to know how each man stood affected: whether his feelings were enlisted in the liberal cause, or whether he secretly disapproved of rebellion against British authority. One of the most effectual preventives of an incipient Toryism at this time, was administered through Committees of Inspection, appointed at town meetings in all parts of the state. These were a body of representative men, fifteen to thirty² in number, from each town, who usually met at the court house for the ostensible purpose, it is said, "to take effectual care that the acts of the Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia, September 5, 1774, be absolutely and bona fide adhered to." But it was as a committee of vigilance that their chastening influence was more specifically felt. If any individual fell under the suspicion of the people, (and this was of daily occurrence), "the Committee were immediately notified, and they forthwith repaired to the person and demanded an avowal of his sentiments." They instituted a patriotic and searching espionage into the principles, actions, and private affairs of every member of the community, without regard to station, profession, or character. If one was found to be lukewarm or indifferent, he was closely watched; but, if a royalist in sentiment, he was forbidden to go beyond the limits of his own farm, while in the meantime his name

¹ The several towns of Litchfield county (February 1775) recommended to the people of their county that "all persons who endeavored by any means or ways to sow the seeds of discord, should be treated with that utter contempt that such criminals justly deserve." Cf. Hinman's *Connecticut*, 51. The people of Lebanon passed similar resolutions, as early as July 18, 1774.

² The Committee of Inspection of New London (appointed June 27, 1774), numbered thirty persons, any seven of whom constituted a quorum. Caulkins's *New London*, 503. In Hartford, the Committee had fifteen members. Cf. Trumbull's *Hartford County*, I. 306.

was to be published conspicuously in capital letters on the first page of one or more of the four newspapers of the colony, thus: "PERSONS HELD UP TO PUBLIC VIEW AS ENEMIES TO THEIR COUNTRY, J—— H——," giving place of residence, etc.¹

The Committees of Inspection were subsequently recognized by the Governor and Assembly as being most efficient agents for restraining insidious foes. They were not only considered equal in authority to the selectmen and civil officers of the town, but were legally qualified to issue warrants for arrest, etc. In this manner became early established a comprehensive police system, by which the whole state was kept constantly active for the detection of traitors. As the majority² of the members of the legislature were themselves Sons of Liberty and town-meeting men, they appreciated fully the necessity of co-operating with the local authorities in their efforts to stamp out this evil; and, in the spring of 1775, committees were appointed to investigate the various cases reported from the towns concerning suspected Tories.³ In April, the Assembly passed an act recommending to the two hundred parish ministers of the colony, that the cause of liberty be favorably mentioned in their public prayers.⁴

In the fall of the year it was felt that more stringent measures were required: that, as the welfare of the people was jeopardized through the hostile influence of Tories, they, like other criminals, should be debarred from society. The Congress itself (October 6, 1775), advised the several provincial assemblies "to arrest and secure every person, who, going at large, might in their opinion endanger the safety of the colony or liberties of America." Washington held strong views on the subject, and a month later expressed himself to Governor Trumbull, as follows: "Seize the Tories that are active; they are preying on the vitals of the country and

¹ The four newspapers of the Revolutionary epoch, all strongly patriotic in sentiment, were the *Connecticut Gazette* of New London, the *Connecticut Courant* of Hartford, the *Connecticut Journal* of New Haven, and the *Norwich Packet*.

² Col. Storrs, a member from the eastern section of the state, writes in his "Diary," April 27, 1775,—“Bad weather for Tories in the House; yet we have some.” Larned's *Windham County*, II. 148.

³ A "Memorial" from Waterbury showed, that the "major part" of a militia company of that town were thought to be "inimical;" and the "true Whigs" prayed to be annexed to a new company. A committee of two was at once appointed to examine into the case and report at the next Assembly. Act of April 1775, in *Colonial Records*, XIV. 433.

⁴ *Colonial Records*, XIV. 434. At a parish meeting in New London it was put to vote, that no person be permitted to enter the church and act as pastor to it, *unless* he openly prays for Congress and the free and independent States of America, and their prosperity by sea and land. Caulkins's *New London*, 447.

will do all the mischief in their power.”¹ That the governor was of the same opinion is evidenced in a letter written shortly afterward to his son Joseph, wherein he says : “ It is of the utmost importance to secure the malignants in every colony, to prevent our enemy gaining any footing on the continent, or receiving supplies, assistance, or intelligence. Let us show a determination to enjoy liberty and freedom while we live, and not suffer hypocritical friends, who seek our ruin, to wheedle and cajole us.”²

Both branches of the legislature were *en rapport* with the governor and Congress on this point, and at the special session held at Hartford, December 14, 1775, passed an act entitled, “ an act for restraining and punishing persons inimical to the liberties of this and other of the united colonies.” In order that the punishment should fit the crime, the Loyalists were divided into the following three general classes :

1. Those who directly or indirectly supplied the enemy with provisions or military stores ; or gave or conveyed intelligence to the enemy ; or enlisted, procured or persuaded others to enlist, in the service of the enemy ; or took up arms against the colonies ; or undertook to pilot any vessel of the enemy ; or knowingly and willingly aided the enemy in any other way whatsoever ;
2. Those who by writing or speaking, or by any overt act, defamed the resolves of Congress, or the acts or proceedings of the Assembly respecting their rights and privileges ;
3. Those reported to the local authorities as “ inimical.”

The Loyalist of the first class was to forfeit his estate, and to be imprisoned, the term not exceeding three years. He of the second class was to be disfranchised, could keep no arms, and serve in no civil or military capacity ; and, if thought necessary, he was to be imprisoned or fined, and to find surety of the peace as the court might order, and pay cost of prosecution. He of the third class must appear before the selectmen or Committee of Inspection of his town, by whom he would be disarmed until such time as he could prove his friendliness to the liberal cause ; and if he refused to be disarmed, the civil authorities could order the sheriff to call out the county militia for assistance. It was further enacted that, on information being made to the county court by the selectmen of any town that there were real estates in such town owned by any Loyalist of the first class, the said court should issue warrants and attach the property and place it in the care of some proper person to im-

¹ Washington to Trumbull (November 1775), in Stuart's *Life of Trumbull*, 220. Cf. Washington to Trumbull (January 7, 1776), in Ford's *Washington*, III. 324.

² For similar sentiments, see Deane to the Committee of Secret Correspondence (October 1, 1776), in Wharton's *Diplomatic Correspondence of the Revolution*, II. 160.

prove it for the use of the colony, and account to the latter for the rents. The state treasurer was empowered to make sale of all such lands, either at public vendue or by private sale, as he judged would conduce most to the benefit of the colony, and to execute deeds accordingly.¹

Early in the ensuing year (January 2, 1776) Congress again recommended "the most speedy and effectual measures to frustrate the mischievous machinations and restrain the wicked practices of these men;" that "they ought to be disarmed, the dangerous kept in safe custody, or bound with sureties for good behavior." Connecticut had already lived fully up to this doctrine; nevertheless complaints began to come in from the various towns, concerning the misdeeds of Tories who were still left at large.² The governor and council were not deaf to these memorials; and, at the regular session held at Hartford June 14, 1776, it was enacted that the goods of every "inimical" person should be seized and sold for the benefit of the colony; also, that he who owed such a person money, should be factorized by the selectmen for the benefit of the colony; *i. e.*, the debtor was to pay the selectmen, who would be compensated for their trouble and hand over to the state treasurer the various sums collected. If any individual said that he was not satisfied that the colony was justified in these measures, a committee was at once appointed to investigate his case, and if upon examination he proved to be "inimical," he was treated accordingly.

The patriot nerve-of-distrust had now become morbidly sensitive, mere whisperings of Loyalist intrigue exciting general apprehension. No slight commotion ensued at Hartford, therefore, when it was learned that the negro-governor Cuff (who had held his position for ten years) had recently resigned his high office, and, without waiting a general election, appointed as his successor John Anderson—a black servitor of the elder Skene, governor of Crown Point and Ticonderoga. This latter prominent official had been arrested in June 1775, at Philadelphia, as a Loyalist, and sent by Congress to Connecticut, where, for the past year, he had resided with his family at West Hartford, a prisoner-at-large, under parole. It was feared that Governor Skene had, himself, manipulated the political wires, securing this appointment of his servant in order to gain per-

¹ *Colonial Records*, XV. ; and Hinman's *Connecticut*, 195–196.

² The following extract is taken from the *Connecticut Courant*, of May 20, 1776. "A gang of Tories has been discovered in the neighborhood of Fairfield, taken and imprisoned. . . . If these internal enemies are suffered to proceed in their hellish schemes, our ruin is certain; but if they are destroyed, the power of Hell and Britain will never prevail against us. Rouse then, my countrymen, search out the nest of these vultures, and bring them to the punishment they merit."

sonal influence over the blacks of the colony with reference to some future hostile movement. Governor Trumbull and the Council of Safety at once took the matter into solemn consideration and appointed a committee of investigation, who, in turn, invoked constabulary aid. After a careful examination of Governor Skene's private papers, and taking the testimony of several witnesses, Hon. Jesse Root, chairman of the committee, submitted to the General Council (May 22, 1776) an elaborate and detailed report, to the effect, that Ex-Governor Cuff had been advised by some of his colored friends to resign in favor of Anderson; that Governor Skene had given his servant a half-joe "to keep election;" that the latter had, himself, expended the sum of £25 in treating his would-be subjects; and that two British officers had contributed fifty shillings toward defraying the expenses of a dance and entertainment. It was apparent to the Council that nothing of a very dangerous tendency had been discovered, and that the whole affair was, probably, merely a compliment to the liberal New York negro from his admiring, but less affluent Connecticut brethren. The excitement attending this interesting though somewhat irregular election seems to have shortly blown over, and it is supposed that the new governor subsequently performed the duties of his office to the satisfaction of all concerned.¹

Three months after independence was declared by Congress, Connecticut became a state of the Union, when her legislature made the following characteristic announcement: "This Republic is, and shall forever be and remain, a free, sovereign and independent State, by the name of Connecticut." Henceforth (in accordance with an act passed by the Assembly, October 1776) any Loyalist of the first class found within her borders, would be convicted of high treason, and sentenced to death. At the same session it was further enacted, that if any one shall have knowledge of any persons

¹ Cf. Trumbull's *Hartford County*, I. 305, and Hinman's *Connecticut in the American Revolution*, 31-33. See also *Virginia Gazette*, July 8, 1775.

Governor Cuff tendered his resignation at Hartford, May 11, 1776. The following is his farewell address: "I Governor Cuff of the Negro's in the province of Connecticut do Resine my Governmentshipe, to John Anderson Niegor Man to Governor Skene. And I hope that you will obeye him as you have Done me for this ten years' past. when Col. Willis' Niegor Dayed I was the next. But being weak and unfit for that office do Resine the said Governmentshipe to John Anderson."

The governor-elect accepted his appointment in the following terms:

"I, John Anderson, having the Honour to be appointed Governor over you I will do my utmost endever to serve you in Every Respect, and I hope you will obey me accordingly.

John Anderson, Governor over the Niegors in Connecticut."

"Pomp Willis," "John Jones," "Fraday," and others, were "Witnesses present."

endeavoring to join, or endeavoring to persuade or induce others to join, aid, comfort, or assist the enemy in any way whatsoever, *and shall conceal the fact*, "he shall be punished by fine, and imprisoned at the judgment of the Superior Court, in any gaols of the State, not exceeding three years."¹

It will be seen that it served the personal interest and safety of every citizen at this period to become an informer. That few failed to act as such is shown in the number and character of the memorials that came in to the Assembly from nearly every town in the state. The people of the shore-towns, especially, were loud in their complaints of Loyalists, who would cross to Long Island and return in considerable parties to prey upon their respective communities.² To repress this evil, the Assembly resolved that "no person in a sea-port town, should under any pretense depart from any port, harbor, bay, creek, river, or other place in the State, in any boat, skiff, canoe, etc., without a written license from one of the selectmen of the town from which he should depart;" and the various small craft were all to be drawn up in some convenient locality.

The following spring (May 8, 1777) an act still more extensive in scope was passed, which decreed that no person should pass from town to town (except well-known friendly people and military men), without a written permit signed either by a justice of the peace, army officer, selectman or committee of inspection, certifying where the bearer was going, where he came from, and reputing him to be friendly. Every suspect was seized and examined, and, if without such a permit, was arrested with or without a warrant and brought to trial before a justice of the peace, when, if found guilty, he or she was bound over on good behavior, or committed to jail until delivered by process of law. All were to aid in capturing such persons, or render themselves liable to a fine; and to prevent any evasion of the law, night watches were kept in nearly every town in the state, by which all the chief roads and passes were strictly guarded.

¹ *Public Records of Connecticut* (1776-8), I. 4. Mr. R. H. Phelps, in his *Newgate of Connecticut*, 40-41, relates the following incident of Rev. Roger Viets, Episcopal pastor at Simsbury: "At midnight some men, who, it afterwards appeared, were eluding pursuit, called at his house and asked for charitable aid. Lodging he dare not give them. Food he could not refuse. The authorities heard of it, became suspicious, and he was accused. He did not deny the charge. He was fined, and condemned to imprisonment in Hartford jail." But, according to the *State Records*, Mr. Viets was afterwards released on parole; and he is said to have preached Toryism to the Newgate prisoners. Another Loyalist minister, Simon Baxter, also preached ardent sermons at the Newgate mines. Cf. *Bew's History of Connecticut*, 175.

² "A sloop captured (bound to New York); carried to Fairfield, with several Tory passengers and committed to gaol. Three other vessels captured with 13 absconding Tories on board." *Connecticut Courant*, June 6, 1777.

At this same session (May 1777) the legislature passed an Act enjoining it upon all freemen to take the "Oath of Fidelity," and prescribing its form.¹ No person in Connecticut could hereafter exercise any office, civil or military, or vote in any town, society or other public meeting legally appointed, or plead in any court (except his own case), until he had taken this oath in open freemen's meeting in his own town, administered by a justice of the peace, town clerk or the selectmen; and the names of all freemen were to be enrolled. Furthermore, it was enacted (October 1777) that no inhabitant of the state, or the United States, who was "inimical," or who neglected or refused to take the oath of fidelity, could hold, purchase or transfer real estate in Connecticut, without special license from the General Assembly; any other conveyance to be null and void.²

It was practically impossible in Connecticut for any Loyalist literature to obtrude itself before the public eye. In August 1777, it was reported that a pamphlet, entitled *A Discourse upon Extortion*, which contained insulting reflections on civil government, was in the press at Hartford. As it was soon to be printed and scattered among the people, the Assembly ordered a warrant, directing the sheriff of Hartford County to seize said pamphlet and all copies thereof and deliver them to the state attorney, who was to inspect them and pursue advisable measures.

To dwell further upon legislative enactments of this character, would be supererogatory. It must be observed from those already cited, that that man was indeed a clever dissembler³ who could entertain views inimical to the American cause and escape the wrath

¹ "You, A——— B———, being by the providence of God an inhabitant of this State of Connecticut, do swear by the name of the ever-living God, that you will be true and faithful to the Governor and Company of this State, and the constitution and government thereof as a free and independent State; and whensoever you shall be called to give your vote or suffrage touching any matter which concerns this State, you shall give it as in your conscience you shall judge will conduce to the best good of the same, without respect of persons or favor of any man: So help you God." *Public Records of Connecticut* (1776-8), I. 227.

² *Public Records of Connecticut* (1776-8), I. 227.

³ A most remarkable case of a "clever dissembler" (recently brought to light) is that of an Irish emigrant, "Squire" William Heron of Redding; who served in the Connecticut legislature during the war, and at its close returned to his extensive farm and lived highly respected among his townsmen until his death. See Todd's *Redding*, 198. But, from "A Record of Private Intelligence" (January-July, 1781) kept by Sir Henry Clinton, it appears that the British chief employed and paid Heron as a trusted spy. Cf. *Mag. Amer. Hist.*, X. 503 and XI. 62. It would seem, however, that Heron was a double-dyed traitor, and enriched himself by serving as a spy for both sides, often bringing secret intelligence to Gen. Parsons and others. Cf. "An Examination of the Charge of Treason against Gen. S. H. Parsons," read before the Connecticut Historical Society, March 5, 1896, by Joseph G. Woodward; published in the *Year-Book* (1895-6) of the *Connecticut Sons of the American Revolution*, 188-210.

of the Connecticut freemen. In the western part of the state, where the Tories were of greater number, they at first attempted some mischief; but, upon receipt of memorials from several of the towns, the Assembly at their October session, in 1776, appointed a committee to repair to that section and "arrest all inimical persons and send them under proper guard to a place of safety." This was subsequently done, and many were taken captive and confined in the various towns of the interior.¹

Tory prisoners were incarcerated in nearly every gaol² in the colony; the yards of which, in many instances, were enclosed with high fences to ensure greater security. So thorough was the prison discipline, and so carefully were the inmates guarded, that few attempted to make an escape. Massachusetts, New York and New Jersey each requested the privilege of sending Tory captives here; and, in the summer of 1776, they began to arrive in large numbers (especially from New York).³ Some of them were the most influential of their class in their respective states: among others being Governor Franklin⁴ of New Jersey, Mayor Matthews of New York City, and Dr. Benjamin Church of Watertown, Massachusetts. This latter gentleman had been appointed Director of Hospitals for the East; but, being detected afterwards in treacherous correspondence with the British at Boston, he was arrested by Washington, under a resolve of Congress, and sent to Connecticut. He was confined at Norwich (November 1775), "without pen, ink, or paper, and not allowed to converse except in English and in presence of a magistrate or sheriff;" but, by an act of the Assembly (March 22, 1776), he was allowed to go out of prison (not beyond the parish limits),

¹ "A few days ago a number of Tories from New Milford and other places, were committed to gaol in Hartford." *Connecticut Courant*, May 9, 1777.

² The principal gaols were at Canaan, Salisbury, Sharon, Litchfield, Farmington, Norwich, New London, East Haddam, Preston, Hartford, Durham, Glastonbury, Middletown, Wallingford, Saybrook, Windham, Colchester, and the famous Newgate copper mines at Simsbury, where, in the summer of 1776, the Tory captives were between thirty and forty in number.

³ The following extracts from the *Connecticut Courant* indicate the great number of New York Loyalists that must have been imprisoned here during that year: "On Friday last (28 June, 1776), 49 Tories, taken at Johnstown, N. Y., were brought under guard from Albany to Hartford, and others were on the way."

Aug. 12, 1776. "Last week from 20 to 30 Tories arrived in Hartford from Albany, 15 of whom were to be stationed at New London."

Aug. 23, 1776. "Three vessels arrived in New London in one week from New York, with Tories collected in New York City and Long Island, who were sent into the country towns for safety."

⁴ "Gov. Franklin of New Jersey is on his way to Gov. Trumbull at Lebanon. He is a noted Tory and ministerial tool. . . . His principles, connexions, abilities and address, have rendered him a dangerous enemy to New Jersey: he is therefore removed under a strong guard to Connecticut." *Connecticut Courant*, July 4, 1776.

once a week, under a proper puard. Governor Franklin was first immured in the old gaol at Wallingford; but at the request of the citizens of that town, was afterward (fall of 1776) removed to Middletown, and finally to East Windsor. In January (1777) he asked permission of the governor and council to go home on parole, as many others were doing, promising to give bonds in surety for good behavior; but, owing to the extremity of the situation in New Jersey at that time, he was not allowed and was so informed, upon which he waxed wroth and subsequently wrote many public complaints.

The rigorous guard kept over Dr. Church and Governor Franklin was doubtless a policy both prudent and proper, since their hostile influence, if not limited in this wise, would have resulted in downright injury to the American cause. The ascription of Dr. Peters, that the Connecticut patriots were a "Puritan mob-ility," is the portraiture of a people drawn by an unfriendly hand. Whenever leniency could be shown to a Tory captive, without endangering the success of the patriot cause, it was done. In July 1776, by order of the commissary of prisoners, many were given liberty under parole to walk two miles from gaol, but were not allowed to go outside of the parish where they were stationed except by a written permit. They could occasionally send or receive letters, which were first read by the civil authorities. In August 1776, the sheriff of New London county was directed by the legislature, "to suffer the New York prisoners at Norwich to take the air one or two days each week for their health, under the sheriff's personal attendance; and to walk in the gaol-yard in the daytime, at his discretion." If in ill health, they were generally removed to a more healthful locality. Liberty was often granted, too, at this time (August 1776), for Tory prisoners to go to their homes (properly guarded) to get necessary clothing, provided they bore the expense of the journey. They were also to sign a parole of honor "not to act, do or say anything to obstruct or contravene the measures adopted by the American States to preserve freedom."

As early as the autumn of 1774—immediately after the town meetings had appointed committees of inspection and adopted resolutions of "contempt and neglect"—a few of the more sensitive of the "friends to government," who desired the respect and esteem of their neighbors, hastened to retract¹ previous utterances, and, upon

¹The confessions of 25 Tories were accepted in one day at New Milford (November 27, 1775) by the Committee of Inspection of that village. Cf. Hinman, 574.

The speech and conduct of John Stevens, the proprietor of extensive plantations in Ashford, subjected him to suspicion, as well as to an inquisitorial visitation from his

taking a solemn pledge to stand steadfast for the liberties of the people, were welcomed back into the good graces of their fellow citizens. Throughout the next two years many "inimicals" of the "second class," who had been imprisoned, were released, after having signed a full and ample declaration of the justice of the American cause, with professions of their friendship to it, and their readiness to take up arms in its defense.

It was not, however, until the summer of the following year (1777), that the Loyalists began to repent in a body and were admitted into the patriotic fold; those of the "first class" being comprehended, who had been confined and their estates confiscated, and others who had fled to the enemy. This remarkable conversion was owing principally to the following liberal act, passed by this Assembly in May, 1777. "Whereas, sundry of the inhabitants of this State, some from ill advice, others from inadvertence and mistaken apprehensions, have absconded and put themselves under the protection of the enemies of this and other States of America, but are now supposed to be convinced of their error and would probably return to their duty, had they assurance of protection, Therefore be it resolved," etc. The governor issued a proclamation assuring pardon of all treason, or misprision of treason, to those who (before August 1, 1777) appeared in Connecticut before a justice of the peace and took the oath of allegiance, and broke off all communication with the enemy, etc. Such persons should also be freed from prosecution for their offences.¹

The following case of John McKee of Norwalk is a fair illustration of the manner in which Connecticut treated scores of Loyalists at this time, who honestly desired to be restored to their former status as freemen of the state and receive the protection of her laws. In June 1776, McKee had been convicted of harboring and secret-ing some persons who were about to join the enemy. He had been sentenced to one year's imprisonment, and to forfeit his estate. At the expiration of the year (June 1777), he said that he was convinced of the iniquity of his conduct; was now heartily disposed to serve the American cause; and prayed that he be released and his estate restored. It was resolved by the legislature "that he return to his family and improve his forfeited estate during the pleasure of

neighbors, which resulted in the subjoined declaration, August 5, 1774. "As I, the subscriber, have talked at sundry times against the chartered rights of the colonies, I do humbly ask their forgiveness. And I further declare that I never will talk or act anything against the Sons of Liberty, but do solemnly swear that I am a true Son of Liberty, and will remain so during my natural life. In witness whereof I set my hand. John Stevens." Larned's *Windham County*, II. 130.

¹ *Public Records*, I. 254.

the Assembly, on paying such cost as may have accrued since his confinement." ¹

Ere the close of the war hundreds of Connecticut Loyalists had voluntarily made public recantations of past errors; had taken the freemen's oath in open town-meeting; and, after the payment of certain costs, the whole or a part of their forfeited estates had been restored. Some, who had early left the colony and remained active in the British service throughout, were never pardoned. Nor was this through any fault or severity of the General Assembly; for as late as May 1779, "believing that many who had fled to the enemy, were convinced of their folly, and desired to be restored to the favor of their country," they passed a second liberal act, extending the same privileges to "absconding Tories" as had been done two years previously. But in this instance, before the governor issued the proclamation of pardon, many of these Loyalists had joined and accompanied Gen. Tryon in his infamous raid upon the defenceless shore-towns; in consequence of which the Assembly and Council of Safety subsequently voted (August 1779) not to issue the proclamation. ²

The wives and children of this class, however, were treated humanely and generously; the former, whenever it was desired, being aided to join their husbands. If this was impracticable, the children (if any) were bound out to some respectable family in the neighborhood. In some cases, where the lands had been forfeited and the goods seized by the selectmen, the widow had one-third of the husband's personal property restored to her, and was granted the use of one-third of his real estate; *i. e.*, "to have and enjoy" during the pleasure of the General Assembly. ³

In various towns in the southern and western section of the state town-meetings were held by citizens in the latter days of the war, and the question put to vote whether any person should be allowed to return and dwell in their midst who was previously an inhabitant of the town, but had gone over to and assisted the enemy in arms against them. This question was invariably resolved in the negative, unless such person should first obtain general permission to return. Few (especially of those who had been engaged with Tryon) ever obtained this permission, ⁴ and the majority, having lost both their

¹ *Public Records*, I. 30. The following is an example of the many resolutions of the Connecticut Council of Safety. "June 13, 1777. George Follick, of Ridgefield, who was committed to the gaol in Hartford, as a Tory, shall be liberated from said prison, by paying all the costs and taking the oath of fidelity."

² *Public Records*, II. 279 and 386.

³ See the case of Mary Hoyt of Danbury in *Public Records*, I. 299.

⁴ Cf. Hurd's *Fairfield County*, 640, for a similar vote at Ridgefield, August 9, 1779. Tories of Ridgefield, who had harbored the British on the occasion of Tryon's raid

credit and their property at home, eventually found an asylum in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick. In after years some of these fugitives acknowledged and grievously lamented their mistake in having thus sided against their countrymen in the patriotic struggle for liberty.¹

It has been seen that this province was thoroughly competent to deal with internal foes ; that, while bloody scenes were enacted between Whig and Tory just over her border in the "Neutral Ground," she was enabled to prevent even the symptoms of a civil war. Though her attitude toward the Loyalists was firm and decided, it was not vindictive or revengeful. An examination of town and state records clearly evidences the fact that the governor and Assembly (and generally the freemen, too) were ready and willing to pardon the guilty and to accept repentance. As a result of this generosity hundreds of that unfortunate class retracted their hostile expressions and became loyal citizens, who otherwise would have remained hostile to the end.

G. A. GILBERT.

to Danbury, were taken by the indignant citizens to the river late at night, and treated to a prolonged "ducking."

¹Munson Jarvis, a prominent Loyalist of Stamford, wrote from St. John, N. B., (July 3, 1788), to Rev. Samuel Peters in London : "I have made one great mistake in politics, for which reason I never intend to make so 'great a blunder again." *Genealogy of Jarvis Family*, 29. For a curious "Confiscation Deed of Property," see *ibid.*, p. 281.